



**DARK
HORSE**
WANDA
BLADE OF THE
IMMORTAL

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CONTAINS
1 PAGE

FINLIPS BY:
JONATHAN
LUNA
and
KOSHIA
LUNA

HIROAKI SAMURA

BLADE

OF THE IMMORTAL



BLADE

OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by

DANA LEWIS and TOREN SMITH

lettering and retouch by

TOMOKO SAITO



CAST OF CHARACTERS



MANGI

Immortal shin
wounded, prisoned, blind
and deaf, in her
quest for revenge



RIN

Last heir of the
Matsuchi-ryū dojo
destroyed by the
Itō-ryū, seeks
Anotsu's death



ANOTSU

The leader of the
Itō-ryū sword school



MAGATSU

Formidable Itō-ryū
swordman



HYAKURIN

Assassin for the
shadowy Magatsu



GICHU

Mighty ryū head
collector

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessanchu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Mangi's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Mangi vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

With the future of the Itō-ryū uncertain and their leader crippled with disease, Rin tells Anotsu, "I'll wait and see how far you go! Maybe the Itō-ryū wins! Maybe it is destroyed! But when I know for sure ... I'll come to kill you!" Magatsu ventures to the site of the Itō-ryū's last meeting with the Shogunate's *bangashira* (see *Blade of the Immortal #89*). Under Gichu's protection, Hyakurin recovers from her harrowing days of rape and torture at the hands of vengeful Itō-ryū renegades (see *Blade of the Immortal Volume 11: Beasts*).



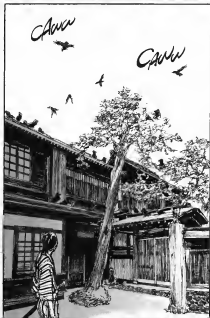
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MAN...
I'VE SEEN
PEOPLE
LEAVE A
MESS AFTER
A PARTY
BEFORE.
BUT THIS...

CHRIST,
WHAT
A *STINK!*
I'VE NEVER
SMELLED IT
SO BAD.

ROTTEN
FOOD...

...VOMIT...
AND
DEATH.

HEY!!
ANYBODY
ALIVE IN
HERE?!

YO!

M...
MAGA...
TSU...

~~~~~



THIS  
TIME...

...THOUGHT  
DEATH  
HAD ME  
FOR  
SURE.



BUT...  
I HUNG  
ON...

ROTTEN  
GRUB...  
LEFTOVER  
SAKE...



WHAT  
THE HELL  
HAPPENED HERE,  
MY FRIEND?  
DON'T TELL ME  
A BUNCH OF  
RETAINERS  
AND EDO  
BUREAU-  
CRATS...



...CAN  
KICK THE  
ITTO-  
RYU'S  
BUTT?



"A *BUNCH*,"  
YOU  
SAY...?

HEH...



TRY  
*TWO*  
OF 'EM!



SLICE AND STEW THESE, AND MOST FOLK'D THINK IT WAS SHITAKE. BUT THIS IS *TSUKIYO-TAKE!*\*



\* POISONOUS MUSHROOM UNIQUE TO JAPAN.



YEAH,  
IT WON'T  
KILL YA, BUT...  
GUESS THEY  
FIGURED IF WE  
WERE SCK  
AS DOGS...

...THAT  
WOULD BE  
GOOD  
*ENOUGH.*



AND IT  
WAS.  
*DAMN...!*



SURE,  
WE WERE  
*POISONED...*  
BUT THE BOYS  
I BROUGHT  
HERE WERE  
HARDCORE...  
*STONE  
KILLERS.*

THE  
*HEADS*  
OF OUR *DOJOS*  
IN ALL THE *HAN.*  
AND TO JUST  
SLICE 'EM DOWN...  
THOSE TWO  
BASTARDS WERE  
*GOOD.*



AND  
THE  
LEADER  
WAS--

I  
*KNOW*  
ALREADY.



THE  
GUY WHO  
*INVITED*  
US TO FEAST  
WHILE THE  
*BOSS*  
WAS AWAY,  
RIGHT?

SO THEY  
COULD  
GET US ALL  
IN *ONE*  
*PLACE*  
WITHOUT  
HIM.



ABA-  
YAMA...

REMEMBER  
WHAT I SAID  
WAY BACK...?  
ABOUT SOME  
GUY OR GROUP  
CALLED  
"AKAGI"...?



I  
FINALLY  
REALIZED...

...I  
HEARD IT  
*WRONG.*



I HAD THE  
ANSWER  
*ALL  
ALONG!*

JUST  
DIDN'T HAVE  
THE GUTS  
TO FACE THE  
*WORST  
CASE  
SCENARIO.*



"I THOUGHT  
THAT GUY  
LUGGING MY  
PALANQUIN  
SAID  
*AKAGI...*

"BUT HE  
*DIDN'T.*  
POOR SON  
OF A BITCH  
WAS CHOKING  
ON HIS  
OWN  
BLOOD."



# 無限の住人



CONFESSION







THEN HE  
THEN HE  
I SEE.



WHAT  
WILL  
YOU DO  
NOW?



YOUR  
BODY  
COUNT  
FOR US...  
IT'S UP TO  
*SIXTY-  
ONE.*



THE  
PAPERWORK  
FOR YOUR  
PARDON.  
OUR PAYMENT  
FOR YOUR  
SON'S  
*TREAT-  
MENT...*

DEDUCT  
THEM BOTH,  
AND YOU CAN  
STILL BE BACK  
ON THE STREET.  
A FREE MAN,  
WITH SEVENTY  
*RYO.*



PERHAPS  
THIS IS  
NOT THE  
BEST TIME  
TO ASK.



WHEN  
YOU DECIDE  
WHAT YOU  
WANT TO DO,  
COME BY MY  
COMPOUND.

*ANY  
TIME,  
OF  
COURSE.*



*WAIT,  
HABAKI.*

I  
ALREADY  
KNOW  
HOW I  
WANT TO  
USE IT.



RELEASE  
THAT  
WOMAN  
FROM THE  
*MUGAI-  
RYŪ.*

FORTY  
RYŪ  
SHOULD  
DO IT,  
YES...?



THAT  
WOMAN...?

AH...  
*HYAKU-  
RIN?*



"SHE'S  
WORTH-  
LESS  
TO YOU  
NOW.

"SHE'S  
ALWAYS  
BEEN  
UNSTABLE FOR  
SOLO WORK...  
AND NOW--  
HER ARM IS  
FINISHED.



"SHE DOESN'T  
*SEE* IT YET...  
OR IF SHE *DOES*,  
SHE'LL GO TRY TO  
FULFILL HER  
NEXT MISSION  
ANYWAY.

"AND  
THEN  
SHE'LL BE  
*DEAD.*"



THIS IS MY  
REQUEST,  
HABAKI  
KAGIMURA.



HMM.

THE  
TIES OF  
*AFFEC-  
TION*,  
GICHI?

NO  
MATTER.

*I MUST  
REFUSE!*



GICHI,  
LISTEN WELL.  
THE DEBT OWED  
BY A *DEATH  
ROW FELON*?  
THE SHOGUNATE  
DOESN'T REALLY  
CARE ABOUT  
THE MONEY.

IT'S NOT  
LIKE BUYING  
OFF SOME  
*WHORE'S*  
CONTRACT  
FROM A  
HOUSE OF  
PLEASURE.



WHAT IS  
*IMPORTANT*  
IS THAT SHE  
EARN HER WAY  
OUT BY HER OWN  
EFFORTS AND  
SERVICE.

IF NOT,  
ALL SHE  
HAS TO  
OFFER IS  
HER  
*LIFE*.

IN WHICH  
CASE,  
WOULDN'T SHE  
RATHER GO  
DOWN FIGHTING  
THAN HAVE  
*US* TAKE HER  
HEAD...?

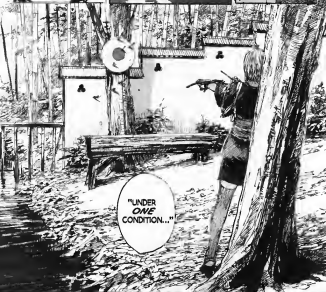


HOW  
ABOUT ALL  
OF IT?  
SEVENTY  
RYO?

AGAIN,  
IT'S NOT  
THE MONEY.  
GICHI. THE  
ANSWER  
IS *NO*.

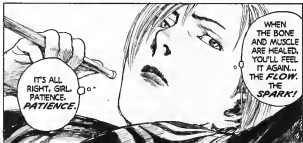


.....  
.....  
WAIT,  
GICHI.



"UNDER  
*ONE*  
CONDITION..."









TO BE CONTINUED...

# LETTERS

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All fan artwork, letters, and e-mails submitted become the property of Dark Horse Comics

You can contribute to the *Blade of the Immortal* #100 celebration by sending in some art or a letter NOW! This is a landmark event, and we'd like both our longtime fans and new readers to chime in. To get everyone's blood pumping, the Luna Brothers have contributed two inspiring pinup pages to this issue (just a few pages away!), since they're HUGE Hiroaki Samura fans. Look for Jonathan and Joshua Luna's Ultra miniseries in stores everywhere... and be sure to visit their superbly designed websites ([lunabrothers.com](http://lunabrothers.com), [jonluna.com](http://jonluna.com), and [joshluna.com](http://joshluna.com)) for a larger dose of Luna magic. Thanks, guys! Thanks also to our monthly readers!! *Blade of the Immortal* #100 is right around the corner... and so are some more delightfully disturbing Samura showdowns!

—Philip Simon



## GLOSSARY

**bakufu** the central government and bureaucracy that grew up around the Tokugawa Shogunate. Originally established in Edo by the warlord Tokugawa Ieyasu

**banishi** officers serving under the Shogun, usually assigned to Edo Castle to defend the Shogun himself

**bangashira** head of the *banishi*

**dojo** a school for combat and self-defense training in martial arts, a training center for swordsmanship

**Go-Ryū** senior counselors to the Shogun, picked from the most trusted samurai ( feudal lords).

**hara** feudal fiefdoms, loosely held together under the bakufu government in Edo by loyalty and force of arms.

**Hiko-ryū** the radical sword school of Anzai Rappai

**Hugai-ryū** criminals working as assassins for the Shogunate, earning their freedom by killing assigned targets.

**jakusoganai** an enclosed traveler's litter carried on poles on the shoulders of bearers.

**ryū** a gold piece

**ryū** a sword school

**tsukiyoteki** poisonous mushroom unique to Japan



## ABOUT THE SWASTIKA

The main character in *Blade of the Immortal*, Musashi, has taken the "mus pinesamu" as both his name and his personal symbol. This symbol is also known as the *swastika*, a name derived from the Sanskrit *svastika* (meaning "wellness," from *sa* — "well" + *asti* — "is") As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, the *swastika* was widely used throughout



the ancient world (for example, appearing often on Mesopotamian cuneiform). Including North and South America and, has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhism is the *swastika*, which moves in a counterclockwise direction and is called (*bonnō*) in Japanese. The *swastika* generally stands for right, and often for magical practices. The *swastika*, whose arms point in a clockwise direction, is generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *hakenkreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. It is important that readers understand that the *swastika* has ancient and honorable origins, and it is these that apply to this story, which takes place in the 18th century (ca. 1762-3). There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the use of the symbol in this story. These meanings did not exist until after 1910.

## ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

### The Artwork

The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Normally, all of our images are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and reordering them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead.

### The Sound Effects & Dialogue

Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave them in their original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel, that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to reduce the panel. We hope readers will view the untranslated sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this literary story: where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street-corner punks from a bad area of modern day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

## NEXT MONTH: Twilight, Part One



Trying to recover from a massive Magai-ryū ambush, Anatsu assembles a colorful group, his finest surviving Iito-ryū warriors, to reaffirm loyalties and focus their anger. Anatsu, Magatsu, and a roomful of new characters rally for revenge! Reunited and recovering, Mori and Rin rest at an idyllic cabin. Their break from the fray may be short-lived, however, as Gitchi, the Magai-ryū headhunter, arrives with an unsettling proposition.

*Rin!*

Portrait by Hiroyuki Sawara, from the Japanese edition of *Blade of the Immortal*, Volume 1.



# Hyakurin!

Written by Jonathan L. Lau



**Manga!**

Shogakukan Manga Series



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The Kiss of St. Judas

*scanned by Was*  
*edited by Grumpy Bear*